of institutional credit at low rate of interest, better risk management through crop insurance scheme, encourgement to contract farming, promotion of agricultural diversification towards income enhancing crops and activities suitable to small holdings, better market and storage facilities, sustainable dry-land farming, subsidy and price support measures like payment of Minimum Support Prices to prevent distress sales by the farmers.

(c) and (d) With adoption of modern technologies, there has been many fold increase in the yield of several crops. The yield of wheat, for example, is comparable with the world average, which stood at 2742 kg/hectare as compared to world average at 2725 kg./hectare in 2001. Similarly, yield of sugarcane was much higher at 70617 kg/.hectare in 2001 than the world average of 65204 kg/.hectare. However, in other crops, much more needs to be done. A number of measures have been taken by the Government to rasie the yield in agricultural sector which include subsidies for modern inputs like seeds and fertilizers, integrated pest management, agricultural machinery, drip irrigation system and easy and timely availability of credit at low rate of interest to enable farmers to adopt modern technology for improving the resource use efficiency. The price and market support measures also constitute an important ingredient of the integrated approach to improve the yield and productivity of agriculture sector.

Boosting banana production

1051. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to boost production of bananas both for domestic consumption and exports;

(b) the current position of the country in banana production and export; and

(c) the details of the strategies proposed to be evolved for boosting production of bananas in variouis regions including Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per the latest available information during 2003-04,11,656 Million tones of banana was produced in the country. The export of banana during 2004-05 was 12572 tonnes, valued for Rs. 1294 lakh.

(c) The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture

has launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "National Horticulture Mission (NHM)" during the Tenth Plan with effect from May 2005 with a total outlay of Rs. 2300.00 Crore for the holistic development of Horticulture Sector in all the States and Union Territories including Orissa. The Scheme aims at promotion of various Horticultural crops including banana depending upon suitable agro-climate conditions. Besides, National Horticulture Board is implementing a Scheme on "Development of Commercial Horticulture through Production and Post Harvest Management", under which the Board provides back ended subsidy not exceeding 20% of project cost with a maximum ceiling of Rs. 25.00 lakhs per project for high-tech production of fruits and vegetables inclding banana.

Launching Mission 4

1052. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

DR. T SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether at a two-day national meet on deciding the winter (rabi) crop campaign, it was called for the countrywide launch of Mission 4 to raise agriculture growth by 4%;

(b) whether his Ministry has identified specific reasons to immediately increase production of particular crop in the lower and upper gangetic plains and eastern plateau, the right mix and ensure that the production of rice, wheat, cotton oilseeds and pulses rises from 2 to 2.5 tonnes per hectare; and

(c) if so, the steps States and ICAR have taken to improve the growth of agriculture in the country?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The last National Conference on Agriculture for Rabi Campaign (2005-06) was held on 15th and 16th September, 2005 in New Delhi. It was, *Inter-alia,* emphasized in the Conference to launch a countrywide campaign for meeting the targeted growth rate of 4 percent in agriculture and allied sectors.

(b) It is envisaged to adopt climatically differentiated strategy for increasing production and productivity in agriculture. This includes emphasis on enhancing production and productivity of rice in Lower Gangetic Plains Region and Eastern Plateau and Hills Region; and of rice, wheat, maize and gram etc. in the Upper Gangetic Plains Region.

(c) The steps taken by ICAR to increase agricultural growth includes: